



Adopt-a-Dream Program

Scholarships for Secondary Students in Copán, Honduras



What is “Adopt-a-Dream”?

Adopt-a-Dream is a Rotary program where individuals, families, service clubs and church groups can sponsor secondary and university students from poor families in Copán, Honduras. Sponsors provide the funding for school supplies, uniforms, textbooks, fees and other expenses for a student of their choice. Sponsors receive letters and photos from their student, and are welcome to visit.

Why is Adopt-a-Dream necessary?

Honduras is the poorest mainland nation in Central America. Many of the Mayan people of Copán survive on \$1 to \$2 per day per capita, much of it earned during the coffee harvest. Few families can afford to send their children to school. As a result, many children drop out of primary school after only a few grades, and very few advance to secondary school or beyond.

Which students are in the program?

Virtually all of the students in this program received their primary education in an indigenous Mayan village school in the mountains surrounding the town of Copán Ruinas. We select students who live under conditions of extreme poverty, who have a grade point average of at least 80%, who are enthusiastic about continuing their education, and whose parents are supportive. For 2019, we have about 420 students from 30 villages in the program.

How are the secondary schools organized?

Some villages have a middle school (grades 7 to 9), but virtually none have a high school (grades 10 to 12). None have a university. Many students in this program attend school in another village or one of the region’s small towns. This often requires walking an hour or two to school.

What supplies are provided to each student?

Each year, we provide your student with the supplies they need, such as notebooks, pens and pencils, textbooks, a backpack and a uniform. We also pay any required school fees.

When are supplies delivered?

Supplies are personally delivered to every student at the start of the school year in early February.

Why is it important to provide uniforms?

Students through 12th grade are required to wear uniforms. Although this is not strictly enforced in village schools, a uniform is often the only decent clothing your student possesses. It will be worn at church and community events.

What results does the program achieve?

Since we began this program in 2016, our scholarships have resulted in an increase of more than 400% in the number of students attending middle school. Demand is so high that we have been able to open six new middle schools in the villages.

Education is an essential tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. Studies have shown that average incomes in rural Honduras rise rapidly with each additional year of education.

Educated people make more informed decisions, have better life skills, have smaller and healthier families, contribute more to the development of their communities, and are more likely to succeed with a micro-enterprise.

Your generosity will improve the life of your student and future generations.

What connections will I have with my student?

We welcome sponsors who would like to develop a relationship with their sponsored student. In this program, you are known as your student’s *padrino* or *madrina* (literally godfather or godmother).

At least once per year, you will receive a photo and letter from your student. We visit our students every three months, and we deliver any letters and photos received from you. Your student will be thrilled to hear from you. We provide a free translation service for correspondence.

If you come to Copán Ruinas, we will gladly arrange for you to visit your student, including a translator if needed. At the same time, you can visit the world-famous Copán Ruinas archaeological park, a major center of the ancient Mayan civilization.

Can I communicate directly with my student?

Normally we ask that you communicate with your student through us. This allows us to translate for you, and to intervene if the student’s family asks you for money or gifts. There is no mail service in Mayan villages, but with the

passage of time more students are gaining access to a smartphone and can exchange messages on Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp. Unless you speak Spanish, one of you will need to use a translation app.

What does it cost to sponsor a student?

The annual cost of educating a student is \$160 in middle school and \$260 in high school. University costs depend on the institution, but are considerably higher. You can provide partial support for a university student if you wish.

Can I choose the student I sponsor?

Yes, we will help you choose a suitable student. You might prefer a student with a specific gender, grade level or home village.



Students in the Adopt-a-Dream program

Do I have to make a long-term commitment?

We ask that you pledge to sponsor your student for at least three years (four years for university). Of course we understand that circumstances can change, and that you might need to end your involvement in the program.

Can I participate with a smaller commitment?

We gladly accept donations in any amount. These funds are used to support students waiting for sponsors.

Can I do more to support my student or their family?

We ask that you involve us in any decision to provide additional support. It is important for us to protect you from cultural differences and unreasonable requests from the family. We can deliver small gifts to your student, but these are not expected.

Who administers the program and delivers supplies to students?

Program funding is managed by the International Project Alliance (IPA), a large group of Rotary clubs in north-western Washington State. Our partner in Honduras is the Rotary Club of Copán Ruinas. They purchase and deliver the supplies and uniforms, and pay the school fees.

Our partnership is known as "IPA-Copan", and we support many different development projects in the region.

What percentage of donations actually benefits the students?

100% of every donation is used to buy supplies or pay school expenses. Shopping, deliveries, translations and program administration are performed by volunteers who cover their own expenses.

Where do you buy school supplies?

We purchase them from distributors in Honduras, where prices are lower than in the U.S. and high shipping costs can be avoided. Buying in Honduras also means more jobs and income for Hondurans.

Is the program means tested?

In most of villages we work with, *every* family lives under extreme poverty and means testing is pointless. In the rare cases where some families have means, we have screening procedures for supporting only those with genuine need.

How do I get started?

If you would like to sponsor a student, or have questions about your existing sponsorship, please email us at aad.sponsors@ipa-copan.org

When do I need to send my donation?

Please send your donation within 30 days of receiving our invoice. We begin purchasing supplies in early November, for delivery the following February.

Please make checks payable to "IPA Foundation" and write "Adopt-a-Dream" on the memo line. Mail checks to:

IPA
c/o Archer Halliday PS
1621 Cornwall Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225

Please send any accounting questions via email to aad.accounts@ipa-copan.org

Are my donations tax-deductible?

Yes, the IPA Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

How do I exchange letters and photos with my student?

Please send correspondence *to* your student via email to aad.lettersout@ipa-copan.org or via USPS to:

Peter Martin
3220 Oakes Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

Letters *from* your student will be translated and delivered to you.

To obtain a photo of your student, visit our web page at tinyurl.com/ydyuoek9. Select your student's village, then locate your student by name.